

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 29616 271352Z

47

ACTION EA-06

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LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: FIRST MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER THANIM KRAIWICHIAN

1. AT HIS REQUEST I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER THANIM KRAIWICHIAN AT FIVE P.M. TODAY (OCTOBER 27). DCM BURKE ACCOMPANIED ME. THE PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED US IN GOVERNMENT HOUSE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANKUM. THE PRIME MINISTER OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING HE WAS PLEASED TO MAKE MY ACQUAINTANCE AND THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. HE OBSERVED THAT THINGS HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY CHAOTIC AND DIFFICULT FOR US IN THAILAND OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS AND HE HOPED THAT THE USG WAS GRATIFIED TO FIND A MEASURE OF STABILITY RETURNING TO THE COUNTRY SINCE OCTOBER 6.

2. I RESPONDED TO THIS BY SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES IS VERY INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING THE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND THE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE ENJOYED IN THE PAST. I INFORMED HIM THAT THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO ASSIST THAILAND IN ITS EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE AND TO ACHIEVE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY. I FURTHER INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD NO WISH TO RE-ESTABLISH A MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND. I TOLD THANIM THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DOES INTEND TO SEEK CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR

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SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 29616 271352Z

CONTINUED MILITARY GRANT ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY SALES CREDITS.

3. I THEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS PROMISES OF A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO CURB THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. THANIM REITERATED IN FORCEFUL TERMS THE INTENTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THIS A HIGH PRIORITY OBJECTIVE. I MADE REFERENCE TO OUR INTENTION TO DELIVER FIVE HELICOPTERS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AS PART OF OUR JOINT EFFORT AGAINST THE NARCOTICS TRADE AND OBTAINED HIS AGREEMENT TO RECEIVE THEM IN A PUBLIC CEREMONY. HE SAID THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO CREATE AN OFFICE WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT. I RAISED WITH HIM THE PROPOSAL WHICH HAD BEEN CIRCULATING WITHIN THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT FOR A SEPARATE POLICE DIVISION TO DEAL WITH NARCOTICS. HE SHOWED SOME INTEREST IN THE PROPOSAL BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WISHED TO GET PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN BEFORE MOVING INTO OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES. AT ONE POINT HE MADE REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT A GENERAL WOULD BE WORKING FOR HIM IN THE ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM AND THOUGH HE MENTIONED NO NAME I ASSUME THIS WILL BE GENERAL POW SARASIN.

4. I NOTED THAT THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS OPTIMISTIC WITH REGARD TO THE BUSINESS CLIMATE UNDER THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER CONFIRMED THAT THE CREATION OF A FAVORABLE INVESTMENT CLIMATE WAS IMPORTANT TO HIS GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME HE AND UPADIT INDICATED CONCERN THAT HORDES OF INVESTORS MIGHT DESCEND ON THAILAND. THE PRIME MINISTER OBSERVED THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO "PICK AND CHOOSE" AMONG THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT BE MADE. THANIM WENT ON TO SAY THAT "SELF SUFFICIENCY" WOULD BE A GOAL OF HIS GOVERNMENT IN SO FAR AS THAT IS ACHIEVABLE IN ANY MODERN NATION. UPADIT ADDED THAT JOINT VENTURES TO THE MUTUAL ADVANTAGE OF BOTH THAILAND AND PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS WERE WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS SEEKING. I COMMENTED THAT INVESTOR CAUTION IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE INDOCHINA WAR MADE A RUSH OF INVESTORS UNLIKELY AND NOTED THAT OIL PRICE INCREASES WERE AN OBVIOUS PROBLEM. I NOTED THE INTEREST OF AMERICAN FIRMS IN EXPLORATION IN THE GULF OF SIAM AND THE ANDAMAN SEA.

5. AS I TOOK MY LEAVE THE PRIME MINISTER ASSURED ME THAT HE WISHED FOR A TOTALLY FRANK DIALOGUE TO DEVELOP BETWEEN US. HE ASSURED ME OF HIS AVAILABILITY ON ANY SUBJECT AT ANY TIME. FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT SECONDED THESE SENTIMENTS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 29616 271352Z

6. COMMENT: THIS MEETING WAS ESSENTIALLY A COURTESY CALL. IT WAS OBVIOUS HOWEVER THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WELCOMED IT AND SEEMED PLEASED THAT A FIRST STEP HAD BEEN TAKEN TOWARD WHAT HE CLEARLY BELIEVES TO BE THE RESTORATION OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS MOST CORDIAL AND HIS EXPRESSION OF A WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS ANY BILATERAL ISSUE AT ANY TIME SEEMED QUITE SINCERE. IT IS EQUALLY OBVIOUS HOWEVER THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, COMING AS HE DOES FROM A RATHER NARROW

LEGAL BACKGROUND, IS SOMEWHAT OVERWHELMED BY THE SCOPE OF THE
JOB WHICH HE HAS TAKEN ON. HIS EFFECTIVENESS WILL DEPEND ON
HOW QUICKLY HE GROWS INTO HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.
WHITEHOUSE

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